GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:102
ANSWERED ON:07.03.2002
FIRE EXPLOSION INCIDENTS
BRIJLAL KHABRI;GAJENDRA SINGH RAJUKHEDI

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of fire/explosion incidents took place during the last three years till now in various Ordnance Factories/Depots/sub-depots/trucks and loss suffered by the Government as a result thereof;

(b) the loss of life and property suffered in each incident, separately;

(c) whether inquiries have been conducted by the Government into these incidents;

(d) if so, the causes thereof, incident-wise and the action taken against the persons held responsible in each case; and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government to prevent recurrence of such incidents in future?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 102 FOR 7.3.2002.

The details of fire/ explosion incidents which occurred during the last three years in various Ordnance Factories and Ordnance Depots and the loss suffered thereof, the causes of the incidents and action taken against the individual held responsible are furnished below :-

(a) Fire/Explosion incidents at Ordnance Factories

Sl. No.	Date of Accident	Factory held responsible for the accident	Loss sustained		Likely Causes of Accident	Action taken against individuals
			Life Loss	Govt. Property (in lakh)		
1	28.08.99	Ordnance Factory, Bhandara	Nil	Rs. 5.96	Initiation of highly inflammable ether and ignition of propellant due to flash from lightning arrestor during thunder.	No individual was found responsible by the Board of Enquiry
2	28.10.99	Ordnance Factory, Dehu Road	Nil	Rs. 0.20	Fire due to friction between high speed drill bit and accumulated	No individual was found responsible by the Board of Enquiry

			explosive powder during drilling of illuminating candles.			
3	19.2.2000	Ordnance Factory, Khamaria	One Negligible	Explosion during gauging operation of 84 mm TPT round	No individual was found responsible by the Board of Enquiry	
4	22.3.2000	Ordnance Factory, Chanda	Nil	Rs. 4.40	Fire due to leakage and exposure of Plasticized White Phosphorus to atmosphere from Bomb body	No individual was found responsible by the Board of Enquiry
5	7.8.2000	High Explosive Factory, Kirkee	One	Rs. 0.01	Violent deflagration of Nitrating mixture during nitration	No individual was found responsible by the Board of Enquiry
6	28.9.2001	Ordnance Factory, Varangaon	One	Rs. 0.11	Accidental functioning of highly sensitive initiator composition during handling	No individual was found responsible by the Board of Enquiry
7	16.10.2001	Ordnance Factory, Khamaria	One	Board of Enquiry awaited	Board of Enquiry Report awaited	Board of Enquiry Report awaited
8	30.11.2001	Ordnance Factory, Itarsi	Three	Rs. 46.55	Explosion due to fall of box containing dry/ hot Nitrocellulose Nitroglycerin paste and resultant impact	No individual was found responsible by the Board of Enquiry
9	07.01.2002	Ordnance Factory, Khamaria	Nil	Board of Enquiry awaited	Board of Enquiry Report Awaited	Board of Enquiry Report awaited

(b) Fire/Explosion incidents at Ordnance Depots/ Sub Depots and carrying Trucks

Sl.	Date	Factory	Loss	Likely Causes	Action taken

No.	of Accident	sustained	Life Loss	Govt. Property (in lakh)	of Accident	against individuals held responsible for the accident	
1	28.04.2000	Ammunition Depot, Bharatpur	2	Rs. 39300.00	Short circuit/ sparking on electric pole	Disciplinary action is being taken against defaulters	
2	03.05.2000	Ammunition Depot, Dehu Road	Nil	Nil	Grass fire due to high temperature and strong winds	No individual was found responsible by the Board of Enquiry	
3	28.05.2000	Central Ordnance Depot, Kanpur	Nil	Rs. 400.00	Cause of accident could not be conclusively established. Possibility of sabotage, though not established, could not be ruled out.	Administrative action is being initiated against two army officers two civilian officers and four other personnel.	
4	29.04.2001	Ammunition on Sub Depot, Mamoon (Pathankot)	2	Nil	Rs. 2769.00	Cause of accident could not be conclusively established Possibility of sabotage or careless discarding of Bidi/Matchsticks, though not established, could not be ruled out.	Administrative / disciplinary action has been taken against the defaulters.
5	24.05.2001	Ammunition on Sub Depot Bridhwal (Gangana gar)	2	One	Rs. 37800.00	Self actuation of copper azide ammunition.	Administrative / disciplinary action has been initiated against officers responsible.
6	03.06.2001	Ordnance Depot, Shakurbasti	Nil	Rs. 287.00	Sabotage/arson Being referred to CBI for further investigation	Being referred to CBI for further investigation	

7	06.08.20 01	Central Ordnance Depot, Jabalpur	Nil	Nil	Court of Inquiry awaited	Court of Inquiry report awaited.
8	11.01.20 02	Truck carrying ammuniti on at Bikaner	Two	Court of Inquiry report awaited	Court of Inquiry awaited.	Court of Inquiry report awaited.

Board/ Court of Enquiry to investigate into the causes offire/explosion and to suggest remedial measures had been constituted in all the cases of fire/explosion incidents.

The remedial measures suggested by the Board/Courtof Inquiry have been implemented in Ordnance Factories to avoid recurrence except for some of the remedial measures as given below: -

(1) Ordnance Factory, Khamaria (Date of Accident − 19.2.2000) − Provision of helmet to staff and workers is being examined.

(2) High Explosive Factory, Kirkee (Date of Accident − 78.2000) − The possibility of washing Nitrator with acetone every fortnight is being examined.

(3) Ordnance Factory, Itarsi (Date of Accident − 30.11.2001) − Twelve remedial measures have been implemented. Balance three measures are under implementation.

The following measures have been taken to prevent incidents of fire and explosions at Ordnance Depots: -

(i) Construction of covered accommodation to house the entire quantity of ammunition held in the depots.

(ii) Upgradation of security and fire fighting arrangements in the depots.

(iii) Disposal of unserviceable particularly unstable and dangerous ammunitions.

(iv) Suitable instructions on security and fire fighting have been issued by Army Headquarters.

(v) All the depots have been instructed to update and implement the updated safety and security instructions.

(vi) Periodic inspection by Board of officers to check adequacy of safety and security arrangements has been ordered.

(vii) The shortage in fire fighting equipments is being made up.

(viii) Depots have been instructed to clear the grass and if required employ casual employees or hire bulldozer for this purpose.